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A SERMON

THE
CHAPEL OF THE MAGDALEN HOSPITAL,
BISHOP OF ROCHESTER'S

SERMON, &c. &c.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

PRINTED BY J. R. COLEMAN, NEW BOND STREET

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BISHOP OF ROCHESTER'S



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17
THE ENJOYMENTS OF THE FUTURE LIFE, AND THE
TRUE NOTION OF CHRISTIAN PURITY,

A SERMON,

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PREACHED IN THE

CHAPEL OF THE MAGDALEN HOSPITAL,

ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 1795,

BEING THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE INSTITUTION,

K. Horley

By SAMUEL, LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR J. ROBSON, NEW BOND STREET

MDCCXCV.

THE UNIFORMITY OF THE BIBLE, AND THE
TRUE NOTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

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MDCCLXXXII.

S E R M O N.

JOHN III. 3.
AND EVERY MAN, THAT HATH THIS HOPE IN HIM,
PURIFIETH HIMSELF, EVEN AS HE IS PURE.

THAT the future-bliss of the Saints in glory will,
in part at least, consist in certain exquisite sensa-
tions of delight; not such, as the debauched ima-
gination of the Arabian impostor prepared for his
deluded followers, in his paradise of dalliance and
revelry—but that certain exquisite sensations of de-
light,

Light, produced by external objects acting upon corporeal organs, will constitute some part of the happiness of the Just, is a truth with no less certainty deducible, from the terms in which the Holy Scripture describe the future life, than that corporal sufferance on the other hand will make a part of the punishment of the Wicked.

Indeed, were Holy Writ less explicit upon the subject, than it is ; either proposition, that the Righteous shall be corporally blessed, and the Wicked corporally punished, seems a necessary and immediate inference from the promised resurrection of the Body. For to what purpose of God's wisdom or of his justice, to what purpose of the creature's own existence, should the soul either of saint or sinner be re-united to the body, as we are taught in Scripture to believe the souls of both shall be, unless the body is, in some way or another, to be the instrument of enjoyment to the one, and of suffering to the other ? Or how is the union of any mind to any body to be understood, without a constant sympathy between the two, by virtue of which they are reciprocally appropriated to each other ; in such sort that this individual mind becomes the soul of that individual body, and that body, the body of this mind ; the energies of the mind being modified after
a certain

a certain manner by the state and circumstances of the body, to which it is attached; and the motions of the body governed, under certain limitations, by the will and desires of the mind. Without this sympathy, the soul could have no dominion over the body it is supposed to animate, nor bear indeed any nearer relation to it, than to any other mass of extraneous matter. This, which I call my body, would in truth no more be mine, than the body of the planet Jupiter. I could have no more power to put my own limbs in motion, as I find I do, by the meer act of my own will, than to invert the revolutions of the spheres: which were in effect to say, that no such thing as animation could take place. But this sympathy between soul and body being once established, it is impossible, but that the conscious soul must be pleasurably, or otherwise, affected, according to the various impressions of external objects upon the body, which it animates. Thus that, in the future state of retribution, the good will enjoy corporal pleasure, and the bad suffer corporal pain, would be a necessary consequence of that re-union of the soul and the body, which we are taught to expect at the last day, had the Holy Scriptures given no other information upon the subject.

But they are explicit in the assertion of this doctrine. With respect to the Wicked, the case is so

very plain, that it is unnecessary to dwell upon the proof. With respect to the Righteous, the thing might seem more doubtful, except so far as it is deducible, in what manner I have shewn, from the general doctrine of the resurrection, were it not for one very explicit and decisive passage in the Second of St. Paul's epistles to the Corinthians*. This passage hath unfortunately lost somewhat, in our public translation, of the precision of the original text, by an injudicious insertion of unnecessary words, meant for illustration, which have nothing answering to them in the original, and serve only to obscure what they were intended to elucidate. By the omission of these unnecessary words, without any other amendment of the translation, the passage in our English Bibles will be restored to its genuine perspicuity; and it will be found to contain a direct and positive assertion of the doctrine we have laid down. "We must all appear," says the Apostle, "before the judgment seat of Christ." And this is the end, for which all must appear before that awful tribunal; namely, "That every one† may receive the things in the body,"

* 2 Cor. v. 10.

† Τα δια το σωματος—not ill rendered by the Vulgate—*propria corporis*—But this rendering, though the Latin words, rightly understood, convey the true sense of the Greek, has given occasion, through a misapprehension of the true force

“body, according to that he hath done, whether “good or bad;” that is to say, that every one may receive in his body, such things as shall be analogous to the quality of his deeds, whether good or bad; good things in the body, if his deeds have been good; bad things, if bad. Thus the end, for which all are destined to appear before the judgement seat of Christ, is declared by the Apostle to be this; that every individual may be rewarded with corporal enjoyment, or punished, with corporal pain, according as his behaviour in this life shall have been found to have been generally good or bad, upon an exact account taken of his good and evil deeds.

What these external enjoyments will be, which will make a portion of our future bliss, in what particulars they will consist, we are not informed, probably for this reason; because our faculties in their present imperfect and debased state, the sad conse-

force of the word *propria*, to those paraphrastic renderings, which we find in our English Bible, and in many other modern translations, which entirely conceal the particular interest the body hath in this passage. To the same misapprehension of the true sense of the Vulgate, we owe, as I suspect, a various reading of the Greek text, *idia*, for *ta dia*, which appears in the Complutensian, and some old editions, and is very injudiciously approved by Grotius, and by Mills, if I understand him right, though it has not the authority of a single Greek MS. or the decided authority of any one of the Greek Fathers, to support it. The Syriac renders the true sense of the Greek, *ta dia ta somata*, with precision and without ambiguity.

quence of Adam's fall, are not capable of receiving the information. And yet we are not left destitute of some general knowledge of no inconsiderable importance.

It is explicitly revealed to us, that these joys will be exquisite, in a degree of which, in our present state, we have neither sense nor apprehension. "EYE hath not seen, nor EAR heard, neither hath it entered into the HEART of man to conceive, such good things as God hath prepared for them that love him *." Numberless and ravishing are the beauties, which the mortal EYE beholds, in the various works of creation and of art. Elegant, and of endless variety, the entertainments, which are provided for the EAR; whether it delight to listen to the sober narratives of history, or the wild fictions of romance; whether it hearken to the grave lessons of the moralist, to the abstruse demonstrations of science, the round periods of eloquence, the sprightly flourishes of rhetoric, the smooth numbers and bold flights of poetry; or catch the enchanting sounds of harmony: That poetry, which sings, in its inspired strains, the wonders of creating power and redeeming love! That harmony, which fans the pure flame of

* 1 Cor. ii. 9.

devotion,

devotion, and wafts our praises, upon its swelling notes, up to the eternal throne of God ! Infinite is the multitude of pleasurable forms, which fancy's own creation can at will call forth. But in all this inexhaustible treasure of external gratifications, with which this present world is stored; amidst all the objects, which move the senses with pleasure, and fill the admiring soul with rapture and delight; nothing is to be found, which may convey, to our present faculties, so much as a remote conception of those transporting scenes, which the better world, in which they shall be placed, shall hereafter present to the children of God's love.

It is further revealed to us, that these future enjoyments of the body will be widely different in kind from the pleasures which, in our present state, result even from the most innocent and lawful gratifications of the corporeal appetites. " In the resurrection they neither marry, saith our Lord, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels of God in heaven*."

But this is not all. Another circumstance is revealed to us, which opens to our hope so high a

* Mat. xxii. 30.

prospect,

prospect, as must fill the pious soul no less with wonder than with love. It is plainly intimated, that the good things, which the righteous will receive in their bodies, will be the same in kind—far inferior doubtless in degree—but the same they will be in kind, which are enjoyed by the human nature in our Lord, in its present state of exaltation at the right hand of God. It is revealed to us, that our capacity of receiving the good things prepared for us, will be the effect of a change, to be wrought in our bodies at Christ's second coming, by which they will be transformed into the likeness of the glorified body of our Lord. "The first man, saith St. Paul, was of the earth, moulded of the clay* ; "the second man is the Lord from heaven." And "as we have borne the image of the man of clay, we "shall also bear the image of the man in Heaven†." And in another place, "We look for the Saviour, "the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile "body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is "able even to subdue all things unto himself‡." This change the same Apostle, in another place,

* Of the earth ; moulded of the clay : "ακ γης, χοῖκος.—Ἐπλάσεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἀνθρώπον, χυμὸν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς. Gen. ii. 7.

† 1 Cor. xv. 47, 49.

‡ Philip. iii. 21.

calls "the redemption, of the body*;" and he speaks of it as "the adoption" for which we wait. The Apostle St. John, in the former part of the discourse from which my text is taken, speaks of this glorious transformation, as the utmost that we know with certainty about our future condition. "Beloved," he saith, "now we are the sons of God. And it doth not yet appear, what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear," (that is, when Christ shall appear, of whose appearance the Apostle had spoken just before in the former chapter; we know this, though we know nothing else, that when Christ shall appear) "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." To this declaration the Apostle subjoins the solemn admonition, which I have chosen for my text. "And every man that hath this hope in him," this hope of being transformed in his body into the likeness of his glorified Lord, "purifies himself, as he is pure."

For the right understanding of this admonition, it is of importance to remark, that the pronoun "He" is to be expounded, not of God, but of Christ. Every one, who seriously cherishes this glorious hope, "purifies himself, as Christ is pure." It is the purity

* Rom. viii. 23.

therefore of the human nature in Christ Jesus, not the essential purity of the Divine nature, that is proposed to us, as an example for our imitation. An inattention to this distinction was the cause of much folly in the speculations, and of much impurity in the lives, of many of the antient Mystics. The purity of the Divine nature is one of the incommunicable and inimitable perfections of God. It consists in that distance and separation of the Deity from all inferior natures, which is the sole prerogative of self-existence and omnipotence. Sufficient in himself to his own happiness, and to the purposes of his own will, it is impossible, that God can be moved by any desires towards things external; except it be, in the delight he takes in the goodness of his creatures: and this ultimately resolves itself into his self-complacency in his own perfections. The Mystics of antiquity, rightly conceiving this purity of the Divine nature, but not attending to the infinite distance between the first intellect and the intelligent principle in man, absurdly imagined, that this essential purity of God himself was that, they were required to imitate. Then observing, what plainly is the fact, that all the vices of men proceed from the impetuosity of those appetites, which have their origin in the imperfections and infirmities of the animal nature; but forgetting, that the irregularity of these appetites is no necessary effect

fect of the union of the soul to the body, but a consequence of that depravity of both, which was occasioned by the first transgression; they fell into this extravagance. They conceived, that the mind, in itself immaculate and perfect, became contaminated with vicious inclinations, and weakened in its powers, by its connexion with the matter of the body; to which they ascribed all impurity. Hence they conceived, that the mind, to recover its original purity and vigour, must abstract itself from all the concerns of the animal nature, and exercise its powers, apart as it were from the body, upon the objects of pure intellect. This effort of enthusiasm they vainly called an imitation of the Divine purity, by which they fancied they might become united to God. This folly was the most harmless, when it led to nothing worse, than a life of inoffensive quietism; which however rendered the individual useless in society, regardless of the relative duties, and studious only of that shew of "will-worship and neglecting of the body" which is condemned by St. Paul.

But among some, of a warmer temperament, the consequences were more pernicious. Finding that total abstraction from sense, at which they aimed, impracticable; and still affecting, in the intelligent part, parity with God; they took shelter under this

preposterous conceit : they said, that impurity so adhered to matter, that it could not be communicated to mind ; that the rational soul was not, in any degree, sullied or debased by the vitious appetites of the depraved animal nature ; and under this, whether serious persuasion or hypocritical pretence, they profanely boasted of an intimate communion of their souls with God, while they openly wallowed in the grossest impurities of the flesh. These errors and these enormities had been prevented, had it been understood, that it is not the purity of the Divine nature in itself, but the purity of the human nature in Christ, which religion proposes to man's imitation.

But again : the purity of the human nature in Christ, which we are required to imitate, is not that purity, which the manhood in Christ now enjoys, in its present state of exaltation. For even that will not be attainable to fallen man, till "the redemption of the body" shall have taken place. The purity, which is our present example, is the purity of Christ's life on earth, in his state of humiliation ; in which "he was tempted in all things like unto us, and yet was without sin." In what that purity consisted, may be best learned in the detail by diligent study and meditation of Christ's holy life. A general

ral notion of it may easily be drawn from our Lord's enumeration of the things, that are the most opposite to it, and are the chief causes of defilement. "These," saith our Lord, "are the things which defile a man; evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies *."

Of these general defilements, the most difficult to be entirely escaped, are the three, of evil thoughts, adulteries, and fornications. Few have hardened their hearts to the cruelty of murder, or their foreheads against the shame of theft or perjury. Few are capable of the impiety of direct blasphemy. But to the solicitations, of what are called the softer passions, we are apt to yield with less repugnance; probably for this reason; that neither the injury of our neighbour, nor a sordid self-advantage, nor the affront of God, being so immediately the object of the act in these, as in the other instances; we are not equally deterred from the crime, by any atrocious malignity or disgusting meanness, that it carries in its very first aspect. Hence these are the sins, with which the generality of mankind, in the gaiety of their thoughtless hearts, are most easily beset:

* Matt. xv. 19, 20.

and:

and very few perhaps indeed hold in such constant and severe restraint, as might be deemed anything of an imitation of Christ's example, the wanderings of a corrupt imagination, the principal feat of fallen Man's depravity, towards the enticing objects of illicit pleasures.

For this reason, the Holy Scriptures, with particular earnestness, enjoin an abstinence from these defilements. "Flee from fleshly lusts," says St. Peter, "which war against the soul." And to these pollutions the admonition in the text seems to have a particular regard. For the original word, which we render "pure," is most properly applied to the purity of a Virgin.

"Purifies himself as he is pure!" Would God! a better conformity to the example of his purity, than actually obtains, were to be found in the lives of nominal Christians! The numbers would be greater, which might entertain a reasonable hope, that they shall be made like to him, when he appeareth. But, thanks be to God! repentance, in this, as in other cases, genuine sincere repentance, shall stand the sinner in the stead of innocence. The penitent is allowed to wash the stains, even of these pollutions, in the Redeemer's blood.

By

By the turn of the expression in my text the apostle intimates, that every one's purification from defilements, which, in a greater or a less degree, few have not contracted; the individual's personal purification must, under God, depend principally upon himself; upon his care to watch over the motions of his own heart; upon his vigilance to guard against temptations from without; upon his meditation of Christ's example; upon his assiduity to seek in prayer the necessary succour of God's grace. Much, however, may be done, for the purification of the public manners, by wise and politic institutions. In which the first object should be, to guard and secure the sanctity of the female character; and to check the progress of its incipient corruption. For the most effectual restraint, upon the vicious passions of men, ever will be a general fashion and habit of virtue in the lives of the women.

This principle appears indeed to have been well understood, and very generally adopted, in the policy of all civilized nations. In which the preservation of female chastity, in all ages, and in all parts of the world, hath been an object of prime concern. Of various means that have been used for its security, none seem so well calculated to attain the end, nor have

have any other proved so generally successful, as the practice, which hath long prevailed in this and other European countries, of releasing our women from the restraints imposed upon them by the jealousy of Eastern manners; but under this indispensable condition, that the female in whatever rank, who once abuses her liberty to bring a stain upon her character, shall from that moment be consigned to indelible disgrace, and expelled, for the whole remainder of her life, from the society of the virtuous of her own sex. But yet, as imperfection attends on all things human, this practice, however generally conducive to its end, hath its inconveniences, I might say, its mischiefs.

It is one great defect, that, by the consent of the world, for the thing stands upon no other ground, the whole infamy is made to light upon one party only in the crime of two; and the man, who for the most part is the author, not the meer accomplice of the woman's guilt, and for that reason is the greater delinquent, is left unpunished and uncensured. This mode of partial punishment affords not to the weaker sex the protection, which, in justice and sound policy, is their due, against the arts of the seducer. The Jewish law set an example of a better policy and more equal justice, when, in the case of adultery, it condemned both parties to an equal punishment; which, indeed, was nothing less than death.

A worse

A worse evil, a Mischief, attending the severity, the salutary severity upon the whole, of our dealing with the lapsed female, is this; that it proves an obstacle, almost insurmountable, to her return into the paths of virtue and sobriety, from which she hath once deviated. The first thing that happens, upon the detection of her shame, is, that she is abandoned by her friends, in resentment of the disgrace she hath brought upon her family. She is driven from the shelter of her father's house—she finds no refuge in the arms of her seducer—his fated passion loaths the charms he hath enjoyed—she gains admittance at no hospitable door—she is cast a wanderer upon the streets, without money, without a lodging, without food. In this forlorn and hopeless situation, Suicide or Prostitution is the alternative, to which she is reduced. Thus the very possibility of repentance is almost cut off; unless it be such repentance, as may be exercised by the terrified sinner in her last agonies, perishing in the open streets, under the merciless pelting of the elements, of cold and hunger, and a broken heart. And yet the youth, the inexperience, the gentle manners once, of many of these miserable victims of man's seduction, plead hard for mercy, if mercy might be consistent with the safety of the treasure, we so sternly guard. We have high authority to say, that these fallen women are not of all sinners the most incapable of penitence; not the most unlikely to be touched with a sense of their

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guilt,

guilt; not the most insusceptible of religious improvement.—They are not of all sinners the most without hope, if timely opportunity of repentance were afforded them. Sinners such as these, upon John the Baptist's first preaching, found their way into the kingdom of heaven, before the Pharisees, with all their outward shew of sanctity and self-denial.

This declaration of our Lord justifies the views of this charitable institution, which provides a retreat for these wretched outcasts of society; not for those only who, by a single fault, seldom without its extenuations, have forfeited the protection of their nearest friends; but even for those, generally the most unpitied, but not always the most undeserving of pity, among the daughters of Eve, whom desperation, the effect of their first false step, hath driven to the lowest walks of trivial prostitution. In the retirement of this peaceful mansion, withdrawn from the temptations of the world, concealed from the eye of public scorn, protected from the insulting tongue of obloquy, provided with the necessaries of life, though denied its luxuries, furnished with religious instruction, and with employment suited to their several abilities, they have leisure to reflect on their past follies; they are rescued from despair, that worst enemy of the sinner's soul; they are placed in a situation to recover their lost habits of virtu-

ous industry, the softness of their native manners, and to make their peace with their offended God.

The best commendation of this charity is the success with which its endeavours, by God's blessing, have been crowned. Of three thousand women admitted since the first institution, two-thirds, upon a probable computation formed upon the average of four years, have been saved from the gulph in which they had well nigh sunk, restored to the esteem of their friends, to the respect of the world, to the comforts of the present life, and raised from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, and the hope of a glorious immortality.

Happier far their lot, than that of their base seducers! who, not checked, like these, in their career of guilty pleasure, by any frowns or censures of the world, "have rejoiced themselves in their youth" without restraint; "have walked," without fear and without thought, "in the ways of their heart, and in the sight of their eyes;" and at last perhaps solace the wretched decrepitude of a vicious old age, with a proud recollection of the triumphs of their early manhood, over unsuspecting woman's frailty: nor have once paused to recollect, that "God for these things

things will bring them into judgement *." But with
HIM is laid up the cause of ruined innocence. He
hath said, and he will make it good, "Vengeance is
mine, and I WILL repay."

* Eccl. xi. 9.



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